UNITED
NATIONS

A

General Assembly

Distr.
GENERAL

A/48/228
2 August 1993
ENGLISH
ORIGINAL: ENGLISH/RUSSIAN

Forty-eighth session
Item 71 (i) of the provisional agenda*

GENERAL AND COMPLETE DISARMAMENT

Conventional disarmament on a regional scale

Report of the Secretary-General

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. On 9 December 1992, the General Assembly adopted decision 47/420, entitled "Conventional disarmament on a regional scale", in which the Assembly decided: (a) to welcome the report of the Secretary-General on this question (A/47/316 and Add.1 and 2); (b) to invite Member States that have not yet done so to convey to the Secretary-General their views on this matter; and (c) to include in the provisional agenda of its forty-eighth session the item entitled "Conventional disarmament on a regional scale".

2. Pursuant to paragraph (b) of the decision, the Secretary-General, in a note verbale dated 18 January 1993, requested all Member States to communicate to him their views on this matter by 1 June 1993. To date, the Secretary-General has received replies from Belarus, Namibia and New Zealand. Any additional replies will be issued as addenda to the present report.

II. REPLIES RECEIVED FROM GOVERNMENTS

BELARUS

[Original: Russian]

[12 March 1993]

1. Since its inception, the Republic of Belarus has clearly and distinctly proclaimed the basic principles of its statehood. The foreign policy of Belarus is aimed at promoting cooperation and security in Europe, as a crucially important region of the world.

2. Belarus views States' participation in international treaties in the field of disarmament as a far-reaching and important contribution to the cause of peace. In this regard, the European countries' participation in the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe is an important practical contribution by Europe to the strengthening of international security. This Treaty constitutes the foundation upon which the entire system of European security is now being built.

3. The creation of a single, centralized system of European security through the participation, within the framework of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE), of such organizations as the Western European Union (WEU), the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), the North Atlantic Cooperation Council (NACC) and others is a distinctly new step which will help to further the disarmament process.

4. Belarus views the practical implementation of the decisions of the Helsinki Conference as an immediate task for Europe. It is our view that the CSCE Forum can serve as a valuable example for States of other regions.

5. The Republic of Belarus is proud to have been the first State in the world to reject voluntarily the opportunity to possess nuclear arms. This example

contributes in a significant and concrete way to the strengthening of regional and international security.

6. Belarus views continuity and single-mindedness in implementing policies aimed at promoting peace and cooperation as a guarantee of the successful resolution of international security issues. Thus, in spite of extreme economic hardships, the Republic of Belarus deemed it imperative to become a party to treaties like that of CSCE, the Treaty between the United States and the USSR on the Reduction and Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms (START Treaty), the Treaty between the United States and the USSR on the Elimination of Their Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles (INF Treaty), the Treaty on Open Skies, the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction and the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

7. At present, the responsibility of the industrially developed countries is greatly increasing. European security depends largely on the care and consistency with which their policies take into consideration the difficulties of newly formed States, and on the tolerance they show towards the complex processes involved in the birth of new democracies.

8. Belarus considers the development and strengthening of bilateral relations in all spheres as a significant factor in resolving subregional issues. When necessary, round tables may be organized, in which the States of a specific subregion and other interested parties may participate.

9. The Republic of Belarus views active participation in the work of the CSCE Forum as a way for each country today to make a concrete and valuable contribution to promoting security in Europe.

10. CSCE should become a place for reconciling and resolving all differences involving disarmament and arms control in Europe.

NAMIBIA

[Original: English]

[13 April 1993]

1. It is important to note that since its inception, one of the Government's priorities has been the establishment of a National Defence Force with a clear mission to meet adequately Namibia's defence needs.

2. The guiding principle in this regard is to have a Defence Force sustainable within national resources and wholly in keeping with the desire to channel scarce funds to those areas where they are most needed.

3. It is further important to highlight that the basis of our defence policy, as with our foreign policy, is peaceful coexistence and cooperation with other countries, and the operation of international law. With this background, we fully support efforts to increase dialogue and cooperation among our neighbours and in the international community generally.

4. The Namibian Defence Force is an extremely young and small force of some 7,000 servicemen. This force is defensive and there is no intention to increase its strength or develop its offensive capability in the future. Given its small size, there is little scope for practical disarmament.

5. Our aim is to develop a small, affordable, capable, well-disciplined, well-motivated and accountable professional defence force to ensure the maintenance of fundamental human rights and freedoms and our democratic institutions.

6. Our current defence expenditure accounts for some 3.5 per cent of public expenditure and there is no intention to increase it.

7. The principle of accountability and subordination of the Namibian Defence Force to the political authority ensures a constructive relationship with the media and the public. Defence expenditure and defence plans are released to the media and debated in Parliament, and are made available to the general public.

8. We support moves to reduce armed forces within our region. We welcome the unilateral moves made recently by South Africa and Zimbabwe to this effect. We hope that other countries in the region will follow suit.

9. The United Nations disarmament campaign enjoys our full support. You will recall that the Government hosted the International Seminar on Confidence- and Security-Building Measures in Southern Africa, held at Windhoek from 24 to 26 February 1993.

10. We also expect to host several further conferences on security matters in the near future, e.g., a conference on security, development and cooperation in southern Africa in May and another one on inter-State security in June 1993.

11. In addition to this, Namibia was well represented at an international conference, "Democratization in Africa: The Role of the Military", organized by the African-American Institute and held at Bujumbura, Burundi, from 1 to 4 February 1993.

12. The outcome of these conferences has been well publicized in Namibia and such an approach will apply in the future.

13. Our full participation in these conferences and our readiness to participate in similar activities in the future clearly indicate the Government's commitment to disarmament in all its aspects.

14. We are looking forward to the inclusion of disarmament issues in our future formal education programmes.

NEW ZEALAND

[Original: English]

[10 June 1993]

1. New Zealand shares with the Secretary-General a sense of encouragement that there is growing interest in developing regional approaches to arms limitation and confidence-building. New Zealand believes it important that arms control initiatives undertaken in a United Nations or other multilateral context should be complemented by the efforts of neighbouring States or groups of States working together. In his 1992 Disarmament Week report, "New dimensions of arms regulation and disarmament in the post-cold-war era" (A/C.1/47/7), the Secretary-General rightly commented that it is up to States themselves to decide what kind of arms regulations appear most suited to local conditions and that proposals adopted in one region might not be applicable to another.

2. Sometimes it may be possible to develop formal arms control measures on a global scale before the same measures are appropriate for a particular region. For example, New Zealand is a very strong supporter of the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms. However, New Zealand believes that a programme of developing regional dialogue and confidence-building measures is at present better suited to the diverse Asia-Pacific region to which it belongs.

3. These measures can include:

(a) Exchanges of views among senior officials or Ministers, perhaps based on conferences of subregional institutions;

(b) Mixed group conferences of officials, students of international affairs and researchers;

(c) Regional seminars on topics of arms control interests;

(d) Collective discussions on regional security issues, where appropriate;

(e) Support for such institutionalized arms control and confidence-building measures as have developed within the region, e.g., the Treaty of Rarotonga and the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in South-East Asia.

4. Sometimes initiatives under these headings can benefit from subventions from individual regional States or the United Nations itself. For its part New Zealand does its best to support and participate in these endeavours.